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ABSTRACT

To determine the extent of state-mandated staff development activity in the states, a study involving the chief education officer from each of the 50 states was conducted, and the results are reported in this paper. The study and report focus on the following: (1) states mandating staff development programs; (2) states planning legislation pertaining to staff development; (3) informational support that states provide local education associations in the development, operationalization, maintenance, and growth of staff development programs; and (4) financial support provided by states to local education associations. (DCS)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A 1984 STUDY OF THE FIFTY STATES

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A 1984 STUDY OF THE FIFTY STATES

Organizational renewal has long been recognized by business and industrial leaders as a necessity to remain competitive in the marketplace. Recent criticism directed at education has forced state and local education leaders to explore strategies or remedies that might foster educational improvement.

With this in mind a 1984 study involving the Chief Education Officer from each of the 50 states was conducted to determine the extent of state-mandated staff development activity in the states. Data was collected through questionnaires, and follow-up telephone interviews. The study focused upon: 1) states mandating staff development programs, 2) states planning legislation pertaining to staff development, 3) informational support that states provide local education associations in the development, operationalization, maintenance, and growth of staff development programs, and 4) financial support provided by states to local education associations.

Twenty-five states currently mandate staff development programs with the largest concentration of programs in the South. The completeness of these programs, extent of state supervision, material support, and the overall quality of state mandated staff development programs vary greatly among the 50 states. Ten southern states mandate staff development, whereas 15 states in the North, East, and West presently

require staff development programs for local school districts. Nine of the 25 states with established staff development mandates are currently examining proposals to expand or modify existing programs. Since 1979, three states have reduced staff development programs. In 1982 the Louisiana legislature made staff development an option. Since 1967 the number of days that local school districts in Texas must spend on staff development activities has been reduced from 10 to eight. At least five days must be spent on inservice activities. Three of the eight days may be used for administrative progress. Similar modifications have been made in Tennessee.

Program revisions like the programs themselves vary greatly among the different states. For example, officials in Florida reported that the Summer Inservice Institute and a program to meet the needs of beginning teachers have been added to the existing mandate. The trend in Alabama, Montana, and Vermont has been to provide more specific guidelines for local school districts to follow. In most cases the trend has been to develop additional structure and/or guidelines to existing mandates.

Ten states have taken steps to initiate staff development programs for the first time. Again great differences exist in the direction states are taking in the development of mandated staff development programs. Officials from Maine reported that new legislation will require staff development for beginning teachers, but with no provisions for experienced teachers or administrators. A proposal is being considered in Connecticut that will require local school districts to formulate an ongoing staff development program. In New York, staff development is being considered as part of a comprehensive educational improvement

program. The proposal involves local school districts providing five days of inservice activity during the 1984-85 school year and a total of 10 days in 1985-86. Long-term plans are to expand the school year by 20 days. Under the current plan, local school districts will be required to submit comprehensive plans to the state to qualify for financial support. In April 1983 the Illinois State Board of Education concluded a two year study focusing upon: "The Quality of the Preparation and Performance of Illinois Educational Personnel." Most of the responsibility for staff development in Illinois rest with regional superintendents who conduct regional and county inservice programs. In accordance with the School Code of Illinois no more than four days may be spent on inservice activities at this level. Local school districts may spend five half days for inservice activities. Funding of regional activities is provided in part through teacher and administrator certificate renewal fees.

A number of states have developed materials to support staff development efforts in local school districts. Materials range from a brief description of the mandate, to three page pamphlets, to comprehensive books. One of the most complete documents is provided by the Ohio Department of Education. This detailed manual entitled Staff Development Leadership: A Resource Book provides educators in local school districts with research and guidelines on the formulation and implementation of staff development programs. Attention is given to: Staff Development in Ohio, The Personnel and Professional Dimension of Staff Development, Staff Development and Adult Learners, Collaborative Planning and Data-Based Decision Making, Needs Assessment and Data Collection, Program Planning and Alternative Delivery Strategies,

Program Implementation, Evaluation and Reassessment, and Staff Development and School Improvement. In each of the nine sections references are cited, and a listing of suggested readings are included.

The Kentucky Department of Educational Resources provides a listing of materials and personnel which may be used for inservice sessions. In addition, "Project Search", under the auspices of the Bureau of Instruction, is a resource bank that includes a listing of personnel, programs, and materials which may be used for inservice activities. Currently there are ten topics: Teacher Stress/Burnout, Discipline/ Classroom Management, Centralized Needs Assessment System, Motivation, Individualized Instruction, Learning Styles, School/Community Relations, Classroom Teacher Self-concept, Rights and Responsibilities (school law), and Gifted and Talented. Project Search will be expanded in the near future.

The South Carolina Department of Education provides local school districts with a manual entitled A Guide for Developing a Staff Development Plan. This document contains information defining staff development, outlining the purpose of staff development, listing the critical attributes of staff development in relationship to rewards and incentives, organizing guides for programs, budgeting and funding sources, planning and evaluation of activities, and developing an understanding of the legal basis for staff development. Seventeen pages of possible resources are also listed in the manual.

There seems to be little correlation between the wealth of a state and mandated staff development programs. For example, 10 southern states currently mandate staff development for local school districts, but in terms of per pupil expenditures nine of the states in the South

rank 37 or below. The tenth southern state to mandate staff development, Florida, ranks 26 in terms of funds provided to support student programs.

Twenty-three states currently provide some form of financial support for staff development programs. In addition, a number of state officials completing surveys indicated that funding for staff development is a local option. Only 12 of the 25 states mandating staff development actually provide funding for staff development activities. Funding support ranges from \$8,000 in one state to potentially \$21 million in another state. A number of states place limits on how funds earmarked for staff development can be utilized. For example, in both Kentucky and Tennessee, funds can only be used for teachers and administrators participating in staff development activities. In Ohio, funding for staff development is based upon the number of students in each school district.

The most comprehensive financial plan is found in the state of Florida. Even though Florida ranked 26 in terms of per pupil expenditures, \$21 million has been budgeted for staff development activities. This figure includes a proposal for the Summer Inservice Institute which will cost approximately \$9.2 million.

The importance of staff development can not be overstated. Individuals in business and industry have long realized that employee training must be continuous if survival in the world marketplace is to be assured. One has to wonder where NASA, IBM, or General Motors would be without comprehensive employee training and development programs.

Educators have begun to recognize that staff development might be one of the answers to declining educational standards. Twenty-five

states currently mandate staff development programs for local school districts, although there is a wide range in the type, breadth, state control and financial support provided to local school districts. A number of states are currently considering changes in existing programs or are in the process of creating staff development programs for local school districts. The bottom line is that if educators want to improve discipline, curriculum development, instructional design, recognize student needs and correct identified deficiencies, staff development is the mechanism to bring about improvement. If student achievement is to increase, teacher and administrative skills must be improved. State education agencies play a critical role in this process. It is imperative that states provide leadership and direction to local school districts. Effective state education agency programs are crucial in this endeavor.